

1           **Uncovering multiple influences on space use by deer mice using NEON data**

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10   **Abstract**

11   Space use by animals is affected by multiple factors; previous researchers have examined the  
12   effects of influences such as sex, body condition, and population density on home range area.  
13   However, evaluating the simultaneous influences of multiple factors on animal space use has  
14   been relatively intractable due to sample size limitations. We capitalize on National Ecological  
15   Observatory Network (NEON) data to ask what factors determine space use by deer mice (genus  
16   *Peromyscus*). We examined data from 10 years of repeated captures of individually identified  
17   mice at 36 sites across North America. We confirmed previous findings that males have larger  
18   home ranges than females and that home range area decreases with increasing animal density. In  
19   addition, our large sample size (N = 2420 individuals) enabled us to examine the interacting  
20   influences of these and other intrinsic and extrinsic factors using a robust statistical framework.  
21   We found that the relationship between body condition and home range area differs between  
22   male and female mice, and that habitat type, latitude, and animal density all interact to influence

23 space use. We conclude that high throughput ecological data can be used to examine important  
24 behavioral questions that have long eluded investigators.

25

26 **Keywords:** Behavioral Ecology, Home range, NEON, Peromyscus, Space use, Utilization

27 distribution

28

29 **Introduction**

30 A home range inhabited by an animal contains all of the resources that it needs for daily life;  
31 home range area (HRA) is the amount of space that an animal typically requires to meet its needs  
32 (Burt, 1943). Multiple factors, both internal (phenotypic) and external (environmental) to an  
33 animal, can influence HRA and these influences may reinforce or counteract each other. For  
34 example, an animal in good physical condition may be able to move over and utilize a larger area  
35 than an animal in poor condition. However, the effect of body condition on HRA may be offset  
36 by habitat quality: a more competitive animal that establishes its home range in a resource-rich  
37 environment can meet its daily needs in a smaller area. Given the potentially conflicting  
38 influences of multiple factors on HRA, it is important to examine the simultaneous effects of  
39 these factors on animal space use. Yet most studies of animal space use quantify HRA for one  
40 species in one place in relation to one or few factors that influence HRA, which makes it difficult  
41 to uncover synergies among factors that impact animal space use. Some researchers have dealt  
42 with the limitations of isolated home range studies through meta-analysis; for example, studies of  
43 metabolic scaling demonstrate that HRA scales with body size across species (Jetz et al., 2004;  
44 Kelt & Van Vuren, 2001; Ofstad et al., 2016). Further meta-analyses should be facilitated by the  
45 *HomeRange* database of home range estimates for almost 1,000 mammal species (Broekman et  
46 al., 2023).

47         Despite advances in large-scale meta-analyses of influences on HRA across taxa,  
48 simultaneous examination of multiple phenotypic and external factors on HRA in a single  
49 taxonomic group has remained challenging (Börger et al., 2006). Such analyses have been  
50 stymied by a suite of factors that limit the ability of researchers to simultaneously consider  
51 multiple influences on space use across large spatial and temporal scales. For example,

52 methodological differences such as differences in the data types (i.e., live-trapping versus radio-  
53 tracking) or home range estimators (such as minimum convex polygon (MCP) versus kernel  
54 density estimators (KDEs)) used to determine HRA may obscure relationships between  
55 phenotypic and environmental predictors and HRA across the range of a species (Börger et al.,  
56 2006; Nilsen et al., 2008; Worton, 1989) and across different studies of the same species.  
57 Further, the most-often used methods for collecting the location data that are necessary to  
58 estimate HRA (live-trapping and radio-telemetry) have historically been both time- and labor-  
59 intensive (Kays et al., 2015; Wilmers et al., 2015). The logistical and financial challenges of  
60 carrying out such field studies have often limited individual researchers to working at a single  
61 site on small numbers of individuals, yielding information about HRA that can be difficult to  
62 synthesize with studies at other locations. The National Ecological Observatory Network  
63 (NEON), an NSF-funded long term project that collects and curates standardized biological data,  
64 opens up new opportunities to examine the synergistic influences of multiple phenotypic and  
65 environmental factors on animal home ranges (Dantzer et al., 2023).

66       Phenotypic attributes of individual animals, including sex, age, body condition, behavior,  
67 and neuroendocrine factors, are all expected to influence patterns of animal space use. Sex is  
68 likely the most-often tested effect of individual phenotypic variation on HRA in mammals  
69 (Clement & Roedder, 2021): male mammals often (but not always) have larger HRAs than  
70 female conspecifics (Stickel, 1968; Wolff, 1989). This difference in space use between males  
71 and females is typically attributed to one of two non-exclusive explanations: body size  
72 dimorphism and the promiscuous or polygynous mating systems of most mammalian species  
73 (Emlen & Oring, 1977; Wolff, 1989). Larger animals (typically males in mammalian species  
74 with sexual size dimorphism, but see (Tombak et al., 2023) often range over larger areas;

75 however, sexual size dimorphism has also been associated with non-monogamous mating  
76 systems (Andersson, 1994), and mating systems can influence space use (Clutton-Brock, 1989;  
77 Emlen & Oring, 1977). In polygynous mating systems, which are common in mammals  
78 (Waterman, 2007), males are expected to range over larger areas to find and access the home  
79 ranges of multiple females, while females are expected to use and defend smaller areas (which  
80 would then be considered territories; (Emlen & Oring, 1977)). The body condition of animals  
81 can also affect space use behavior, although it is more often evaluated in relation to dispersal  
82 than HRA (reviewed by Clobert et al., (2009)). In relation to dispersal, better body condition  
83 typically correlates with an increased likelihood to disperse (Holekamp, 1986), or increased  
84 dispersal distance. Body condition would be expected to influence HRA in a similar way:  
85 animals with good body condition should be able to use larger areas than animals in poor  
86 condition (Fokidis et al., 2007).

87         Environmental conditions, such as population density and habitat type, have also been  
88 found to affect space use behavior. Typically, population density is negatively correlated with  
89 HRA (Šálek et al., 2015; Schradin et al., 2010), and at increased population densities, animals  
90 may also exhibit increased home range overlap with neighbors and/or increased territoriality  
91 (Wolff, 1989)). For animals that use multiple types of habitat, HRA may vary with habitat type  
92 (e.g., Ofstad et al., 2016). However, it can be difficult to disentangle the effects of habitat type  
93 and population density on HRA, as these factors often covary (Stickel, 1968). Finally, for  
94 widely-distributed species, latitude (or factors associated with latitude, such as temperature and  
95 resource availability), may affect space use (Gonzalez-Borrajo et al., 2017; Mattisson et al.,  
96 2013; Morellet et al., 2013). For example, Gompper & Gittleman (1991) found that HRA of  
97 small carnivores increased with increasing latitude, likely because decreasing resource

98 availability at higher latitudes necessitated the use of larger areas to obtain the resources needed  
99 to meet basic needs.

100         Here we leverage the power of the large temporal and spatial scale of data collected by  
101 the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) to simultaneously consider the influences  
102 of multiple phenotypic and environmental factors on HRA in the most abundant and widely-  
103 distributed genus of rodents in North America, *Peromyscus* (deer mice). NEON is a nation-wide  
104 network of field sites where a variety of ecological and organismal data are being collected over  
105 a 30-year period using standardized methodologies (Dantzer et al., 2023). NEON enables  
106 comparisons across large temporal and spatial scales; for example, examining the relationship  
107 between niche overlap and latitude in rodents (Read et al., 2018). NEON includes 47 terrestrial  
108 sites and small mammal live-trapping data are collected at the 44 of these sites (sites in Hawaii  
109 and Puerto Rico are excluded). The dataset that we use here includes captures from the 36  
110 NEON sites with sufficient *Peromyscus* captures for the calculation of a home range, spanning  
111 almost 20 degrees of latitude and 10 years in three macrohabitat types (forest, grassland, and  
112 shrubland). We conducted our analyses at the genus, rather than species, level because the  
113 original NEON small mammal sampling protocol (Paull et al., 2023) predates a taxonomic  
114 revision of *P. maniculatus sensu lato*, which elevated multiple clades within *P. maniculatus*  
115 *sensu lato* to species status (Boria & Blois, 2023; Bradley & Lindsey, 2019; Greenbaum et al.,  
116 2019). Thus, all of these now-recognized species are coded as *P. maniculatus* in the NEON data  
117 set. Furthermore, morphological similarities between some distantly-related species lead to  
118 difficulty in reliably distinguishing some pairs of syntopic *Peromyscus* species in the field (e.g.,  
119 *maniculatus/leucopus*, *maniculatus/keeni*, and *leucopus/gossypinus*). However, because most  
120 *Peromyscus* species are ecologically very similar and our predictions about space use are the

121 same for all species included in our study, we condensed data to the genus level to avoid any  
122 impact that misclassification of species might have on our results. The remarkable spatial and  
123 temporal replication of the NEON dataset allows us to simultaneously investigate the roles of  
124 both phenotypic (sex and body condition) and environmental (density, habitat type, and latitude)  
125 factors, as well as interactions among these factors, on space use in *Peromyscus*. We predicted  
126 that males would have larger HRAs than females, that HRA would be negatively correlated with  
127 animal density but positively influenced by body condition, that HRA would increase with  
128 latitude, and that habitat type would affect HRA.

129

## 130 **Materials and methods**

### 131 *NEON data*

132 NEON collects small mammal capture data on 1 ha grids set with 100 Sherman traps at 10 x 10  
133 meter intervals. Each terrestrial NEON site contains 3-8 small mammal trapping grids and each  
134 grid is sampled in 4-6 bouts each year, with bouts taking place over either 1 night (in the case of  
135 “diversity grids”) or 3 nights (in the case of “pathogen grids”). When individuals from target  
136 species are captured, they are weighed, sexed, measured, and identified to genus, and when  
137 possible, to species, before being tagged with a unique identifier and released. Details on the  
138 NEON small mammal sampling protocol can be found at: [https://data.neonscience.org/data-](https://data.neonscience.org/data-products/DP1.10072.001)  
139 [products/DP1.10072.001](https://data.neonscience.org/data-products/DP1.10072.001).

140 We retrieved all small mammal capture data available from NEON in January 2023 for  
141 use in our analysis. This initial dataset contained capture data on 169 species from 46 sites from  
142 2013 to 2022. We filtered this initial dataset to include only captures of *Peromyscus*. We then  
143 removed records of *Peromyscus* species that exhibit some degree of social and/or genetic

144 monogamy: *P. californicus*, *P. eremicus*, and *P. polionotus* (Dewsbury, 1981; Kalcounis-Rüppell  
145 & Ribble, 2007). Not only is monogamy an atypical mating system for the genus, monogamy  
146 would also be expected to influence predictions about sex differences in HRA (Emlen & Oring,  
147 1977). These three species have relatively limited distributions and are morphologically easy to  
148 distinguish from other *Peromyscus* species (*P. californicus* and *P. polionotus* are the largest and  
149 smallest members of the genus, respectively). Thus, unlike some other species of *Peromyscus*,  
150 these three species can be reliably identified and removed from the dataset. After the removal of  
151 these three species, we were left with the following *Peromyscus* species in our dataset (ordered  
152 from largest to smallest sample size): *leucopus*, *maniculatus (sensu lato)*, *gossypinus*, *boyllii*,  
153 *truei*, *keeni*, and *attwateri*.

154

#### 155 *Home range area calculation*

156 To calculate home range area, we computed the utilization distribution of each animal and  
157 considered the 50% kernel area as the HRA. We only included in this analysis animals that had  
158 five or more capture events at at least two unique locations. We used the functions `kernelUD()`  
159 and `kernel.area()` from the R package `adehabitatHR` (Calenge, 2006) to calculate 50% kernel  
160 density estimate home range areas.

161 We focused our analysis of HRA on animals that had five or more captures as adults  
162 based on a rarefaction analysis that determined that five locations provided sufficient information  
163 to obtain an accurate home range area using a utilization distribution (or kernel density  
164 estimation) approach (see supplementary materials). The rarefaction analysis further showed that  
165 using a minimum convex polygon (MCP) to calculate home range area was not a reliable method

166 (as found by others: Socias-Martínez et al., 2023) and so we only used a utilization distribution  
167 (KDE) approach here to calculate HRA.

168

#### 169 *Assignment of sex*

170 Although there are clear differences in external genitalia between male and female *Peromyscus*,  
171 misidentifications can occur, especially for non-reproductive animals. The sex of each  
172 individual in our analysis was assigned as the sex it was noted as in the NEON database for the  
173 majority of its capture events. For example, if an animal was noted as a male on more captures  
174 than it was noted to be a female, we considered it to be a male, and vice versa. We used  
175 ‘pregnancy status’ in the NEON database to further identify females. We considered any  
176 individual that was ever noted to be pregnant as a female, regardless of the number of times that  
177 it was noted as a male on other capture occasions. If pregnancy was never observed and the  
178 number of times an animal was noted as male was equal to the number of times it was noted to  
179 be a female, we designated its sex as ‘unknown’.

180

#### 181 *Determining animal age*

182 We included only captures of adult animals in our analysis because space use by juveniles may  
183 reflect use of the mother’s home range, dispersal, or other developmental processes that do not  
184 reflect typical space use for an individual. Thus, if an animal was captured when it was both a  
185 juvenile and an adult, we considered in our analysis only its captures as an adult. Each capture  
186 was assigned a lifestage in the field, but we assigned a lifestage to each capture based on body  
187 mass to avoid relying on subjective criteria such as stage of the post-juvenal molt, which may be  
188 applied unevenly across observers.

189 We applied body mass cut-offs based on existing body mass data in relation to  
190 developmental stage for each species in our dataset, grouping species into ‘small’ and ‘large’  
191 categories (Derrickson, 1988; Drickamer & Bernstein, 1972; Layne, 1968; McCabe &  
192 Blanchard, 1950; Pournelle, 1952; Wolff et al., 1988). Mass records differed significantly  
193 between these two categories (p-value < 0.001; see Figure S2A), justifying our assignment of  
194 each species. For ‘small’ species (*maniculatus*, *leucopus*), we assigned ‘subadult’ lifestage to  
195 captures < 16 g and ‘adult’ lifestage to captures 16+ g. For ‘large’ species (all others: *keeni*,  
196 *truei*, *gossypinus*, *attwateri*, and *boylli*), we assigned ‘subadult’ lifestage to captures < 19 g and  
197 ‘adult’ lifestage to captures 19+ g. In some cases, individuals were assigned as adults based on  
198 body mass at an early capture, but later it lost mass, dropping below the adult mass cut-off, or its  
199 mass was not recorded. To account for this weight loss and missing data, we assigned ‘adult’  
200 lifestage to all captures of an individual that occurred after the first time it was above the ‘adult’  
201 threshold.

202

### 203 *Computing body condition*

204 To determine the body condition of each individual, we calculated the mean body mass (g) and  
205 mean hindfoot length (mm) for each mouse from all of its captures (Schulte-Hostedde et al.,  
206 2005). To avoid the confounding effects of pregnancy on body condition estimates, we excluded  
207 from this calculation any captures when an individual was pregnant or when pregnancy status  
208 was listed as ‘unknown’. We then regressed the mean mass against the mean hindfoot length  
209 using the `lm()` function in R ‘base’, and assigned the residuals of this regression to each  
210 individual in our dataset as their body condition. We conducted these regressions and body

211 condition assignment separately for the ‘small’ and ‘large’ species to account for differences in  
212 mass and hindfoot length between large and small species (Figure S2B,C).

213

#### 214 *Vegetation types*

215 To examine the effect of vegetation type on home range area, we grouped NEON’s ‘vegetation  
216 types’ into three categories to ease analysis and biological interpretation. The three categories  
217 were: forest (NEON vegetation types 'deciduousForest', 'mixedForest', 'evergreenForest', and  
218 'woodyWetlands'), grassland (NEON vegetation types 'grasslandHerbaceous', 'cultivatedCrops',  
219 and ‘pastureHay’) and shrubland (NEON vegetation type 'shrubScrub').

220

#### 221 *Calculating animal density*

222 To determine the density of *Peromyscus* that each focal individual experienced, we calculated  
223 the minimum number of *Peromyscus* individuals known alive (MNKA) at each plot on each  
224 sampling date. For this calculation, individuals were considered to be “known alive” for all  
225 sampling dates between their first and last captures at the sampling plot. We assigned each  
226 individual in our dataset an ‘average MNKA’ which was the mean of all MNKA values for the  
227 plot in which the focal individual was captured during all sampling dates between the first and  
228 last capture of the focal individual.

229

#### 230 *Removing outliers*

231 Some of the capture records had weight above 50 g (N=8, out of 23,959) or hindfoot length  
232 greater than 28 mm (N=7, out of 23,959). These values are unlikely for the species in our  
233 dataset, therefore we replaced the values for weight and hindfoot length with NA for those 15

234 records and included them only for the home range analysis (but not the body condition  
235 analysis). We also removed one individual (out of 2,420) that was recorded as 9g, which is an  
236 unrealistically low weight for an adult. In addition, we removed one individual with inconsistent  
237 pregnancy status (i.e., consecutive days fluctuating between positive and negative pregnancy  
238 status).

239

#### 240 *Statistical analysis*

241 To determine what factors impact HRA in *Peromyscus*, we used a statistical model selection  
242 approach in which we compared Generalized Mixed Models (GLMMs) with different interaction  
243 terms between the factors of interest (see Supplementary Materials for a list of the models tested  
244 and their comparison). We only included interaction terms that had biological meaning (Johnson  
245 & Omland, 2004). In all models, HRA was the response variable. Explanatory variables included  
246 sex, body condition, vegetation type, animal density (meanMNKA), and latitude as fixed effects.  
247 All models also included year and site as random effects to account for variation across years and  
248 sites in the model. All models were fitted with a Gamma log link function using the ‘lme4’ R  
249 package (Bates et al., 2015) and analysis of deviance tables were obtained using the Anova()  
250 function in the ‘car’ R package (Fox & Weisberg, 2019). We examined if models met all  
251 statistical assumptions (like linearity, homogeneity of variance, etc) using the check\_model()  
252 function in the package ‘performance’ {ref}. Finally, we compared the AIC values of all models  
253 examined using the compare\_performance() function in the package ‘performance’ (Lüdecke et  
254 al., 2021). We selected the best fit model based on AIC weight.

255

256

257 **Results**

258 Of the 12 models we tested, the best fit model included interaction terms between sex and body  
259 condition, habitat type and latitude, latitude and animal density, habitat type and animal density,  
260 and habitat type, animal density, and latitude (three-way interaction) (AIC weight = 0.98, Table  
261 1, for all AIC values see Table S1). The main factors that had a significant impact on home range  
262 area were sex, habitat type, latitude, and animal density (Table 1). Interestingly, body condition  
263 by itself did not have a significant impact on home range area, it only impacted home range area  
264 when considering its interaction with sex. Overall, males had larger home ranges than females  
265 (Figure 1) and as male body condition improved, HRA increased (Figure 2). In contrast, as  
266 female body condition improved, HRA decreased (Figure 2).

267 Home range area varied by habitat type, with the smallest areas used in forested habitat  
268 and the largest in grasslands. Home range areas in shrublands were intermediate and not  
269 significantly different from home range areas in forests and grasslands (Post hoc Tukey test,  
270 Figure 3).

271 Home range area increased with latitude (Figure 4) and decreased with animal density  
272 (Figure 5). There was a significant interaction between latitude and animal density, which means  
273 that the effect of animal density on HRA differs across latitudes. While latitude and animal  
274 density are positively correlated with one another (Figure S3), suggesting that latitude might  
275 explain animal density rather than HRA, the fact that the relationship between HRA and latitude  
276 is in the opposite direction of the relationship between HRA and animal density, indicates that  
277 both factors have an important impact on home range area, regardless of the impact of latitude on  
278 animal density.

279 Finally, we found a significant interaction between latitude, animal density, and habitat  
 280 type, which means that the relationship between HRA, latitude, and animal density differs across  
 281 habitat types. Indeed, in forests, home range areas are larger at higher latitudes, and the decline  
 282 in HRA with increasing animal density is slightly more steep in low latitudes than in high  
 283 latitudes (Figure 6A). In contrast, home range areas in shrublands are larger at lower latitudes  
 284 than at higher latitudes. The decline of HRA with animal density in shrublands does not seem to  
 285 differ across latitudes, but the rate of this decrease (slope of the line) is smaller than in forests  
 286 (Figure 6B). Finally, in grasslands, home range areas are larger in high compared to low latitudes  
 287 when animal density is low, but as animal density increases, home range areas decrease as  
 288 latitude increases. Thus, the rate at which home range areas decrease with animal density (slope  
 289 of the line) is greater in high latitudes than in low latitudes in grassland habitats (Figure 6C).

290

291 **Table 1:** Analysis of deviance of the best fit model.

<b>Effect</b>	<b>Chisq</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>138.188</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt; 0.0001</b>
Body Condition	1.059	1	0.303
<b>Habitat type</b>	<b>6.657</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.036</b>
<b>Latitude</b>	<b>9.257</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.002</b>
<b>Animal density (meanMNKA)</b>	<b>286.201</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt; 0.0001</b>
<b>Sex x Body Condition</b>	<b>10.287</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.001</b>
Habitat type x Latitude	5.840	2	0.054
<b>Latitude x Animal density (meanMNKA)</b>	<b>14.731</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.0001</b>
Habitat type x Animal density (meanMNKA)	5.859	2	0.053
<b>Latitude x Habitat type x Animal density</b>	<b>19.242</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>

(meanMnKA)			
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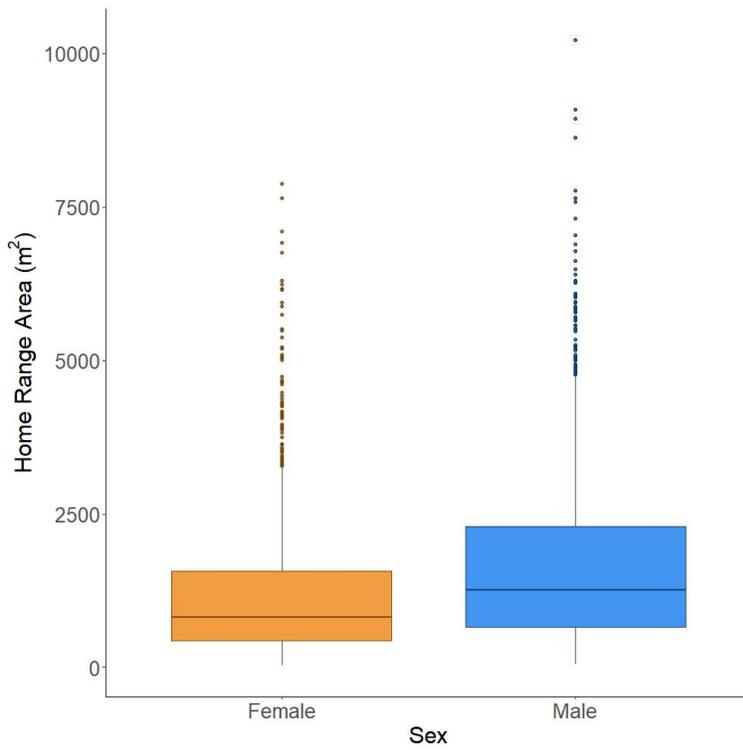
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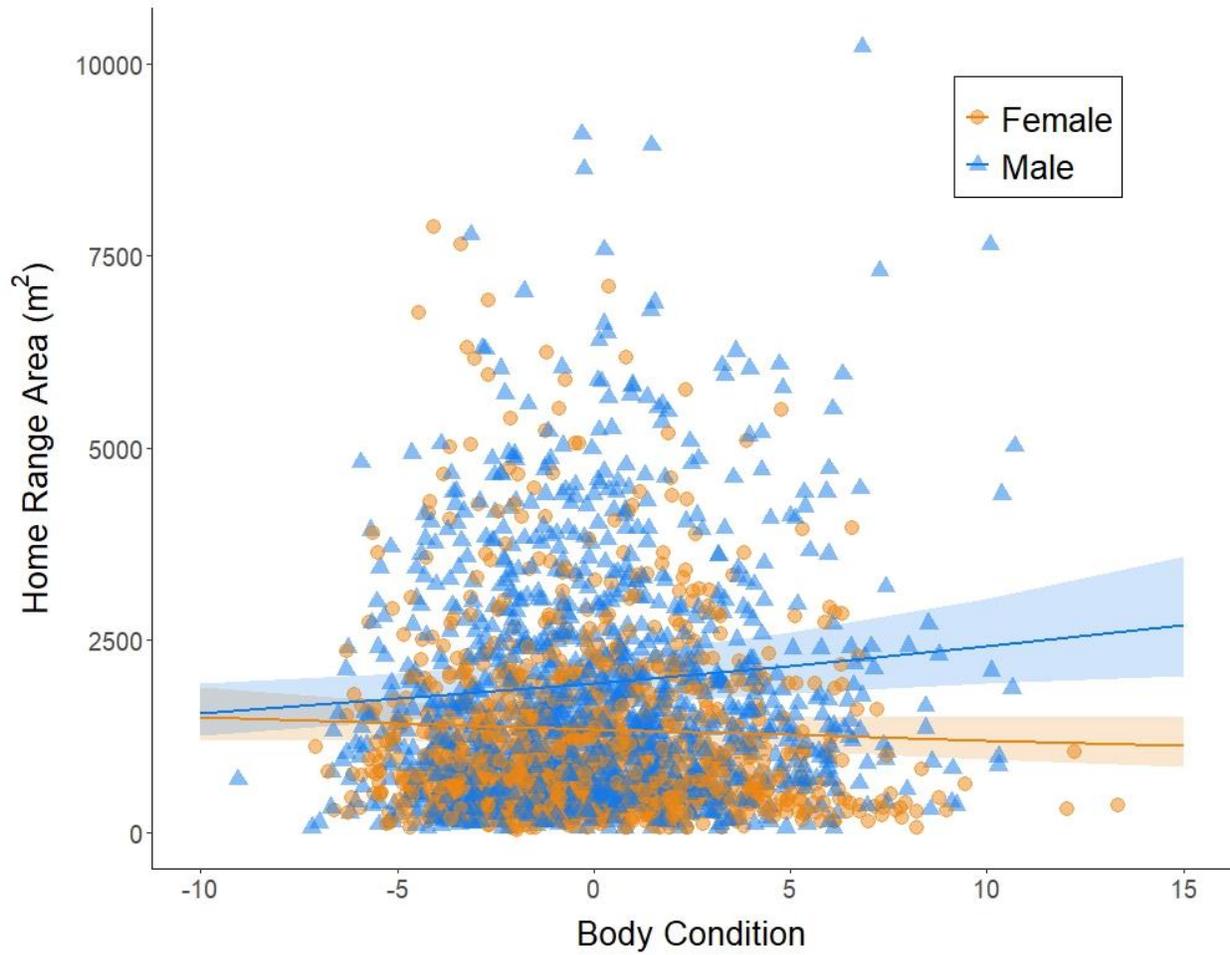
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298 **Figure 1.** Home range area (m<sup>2</sup>) by sex - males in blue and females in orange. Horizontal lines  
299 indicate the median, boxplots indicate the interquartile range, vertical lines extend to 1.5 times  
300 the interquartile range, and points indicate outliers.

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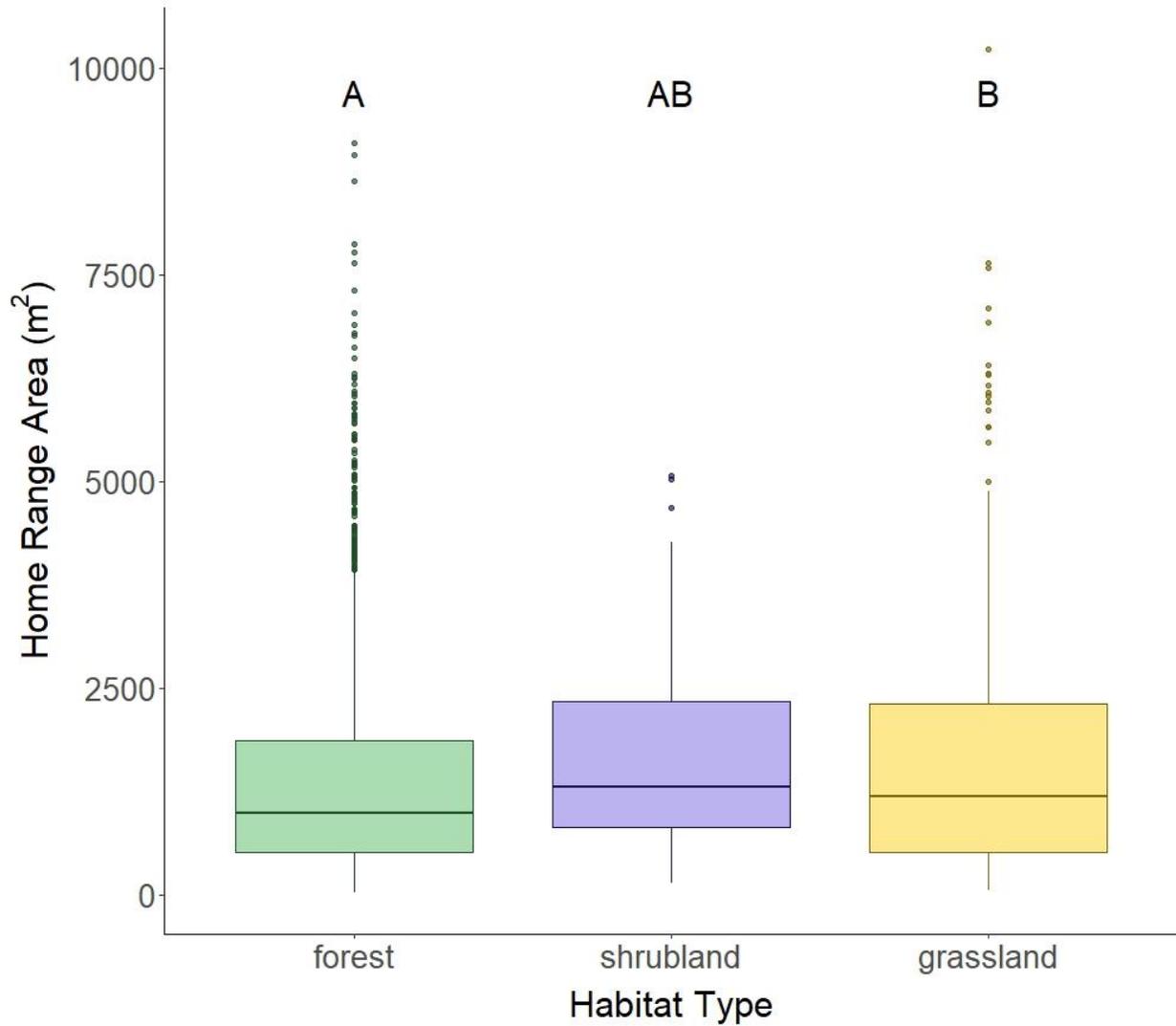
303 **Figure 2.** Home range area (m<sup>2</sup>) as a function of body condition for males (blue triangles) and  
304 females (orange circles). Each point is an individual mouse and the lines are the predicted values  
305 from the statistical model, with confidence intervals as shaded areas around the lines.

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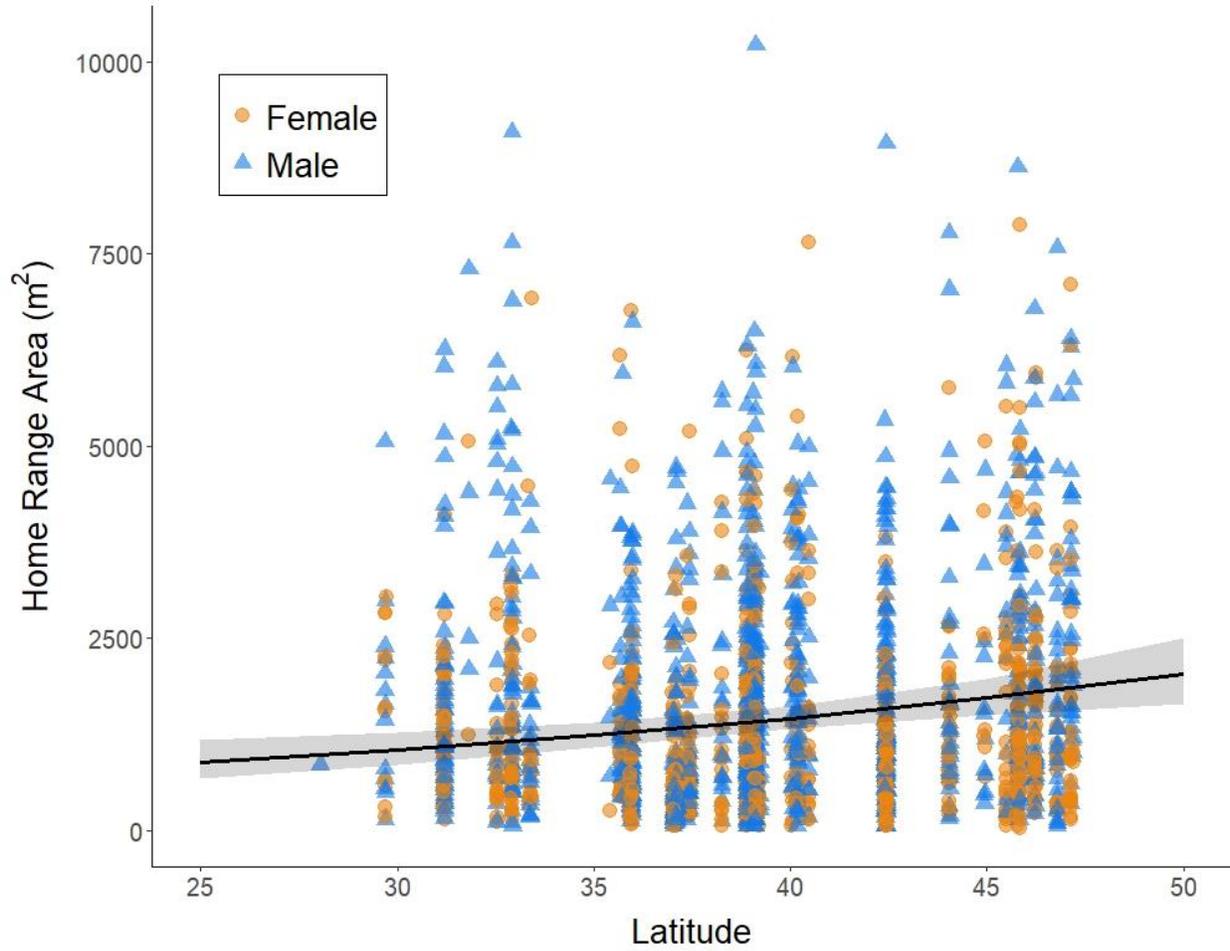
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311 **Figure 3:** Home range area (m<sup>2</sup>) by habitat type - forests in green, shrublands in purple, and  
 312 grasslands in yellow. Horizontal lines indicate the median, boxplots indicate the interquartile  
 313 range, vertical lines extend to 1.5 times the interquartile range, and points indicate outliers.  
 314 Boxes that do not share a letter above them are statistically significantly different according to a  
 315 post hoc Tukey test.

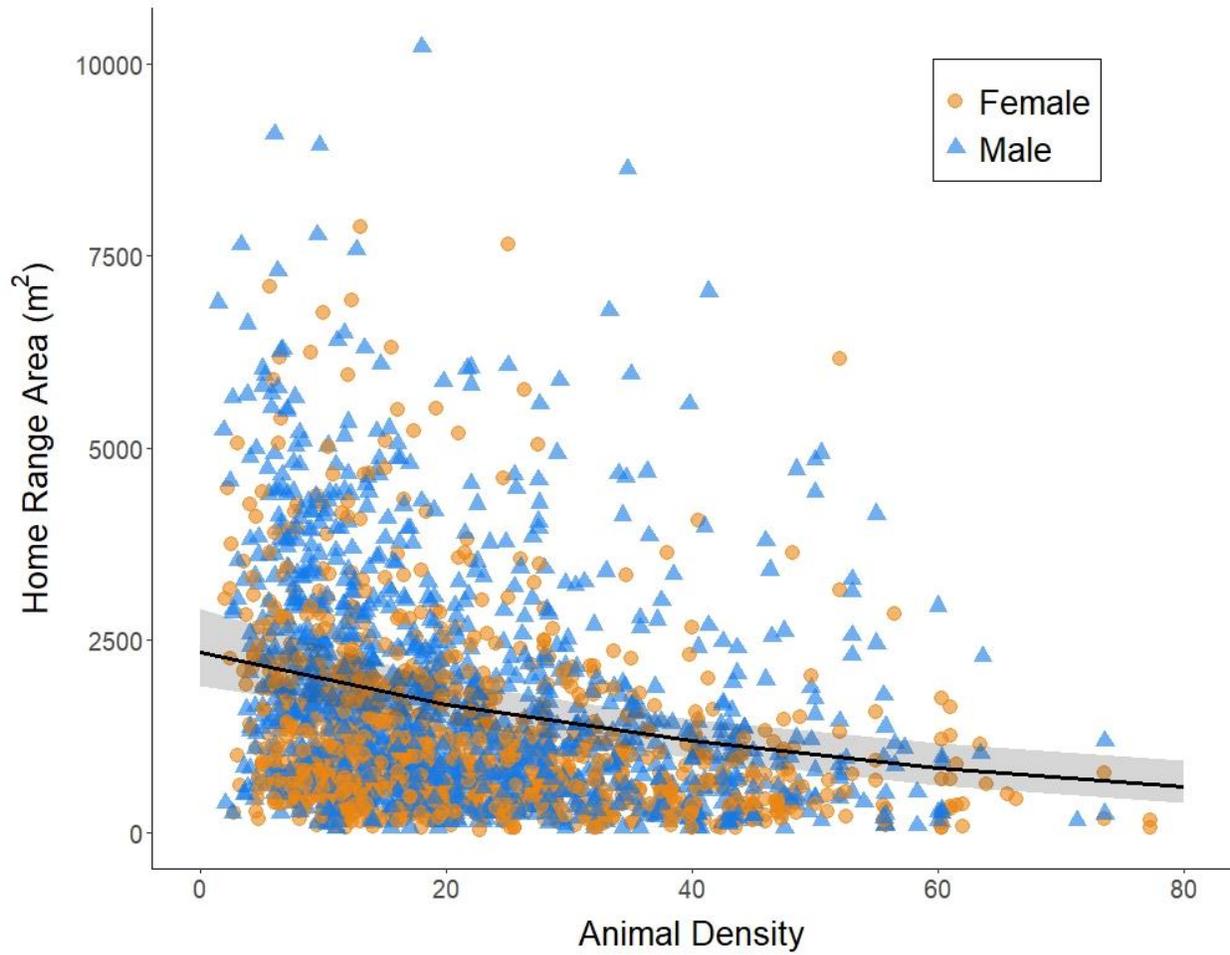
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319  
 320 **Figure 4.** Home range area (m<sup>2</sup>) as a function of latitude for males (blue triangles) and females  
 321 (orange circles). Each point is an individual mouse and the line is the predicted values from the  
 322 statistical model, with confidence intervals as shaded areas around the line.  
 323



324

325 **Figure 5.** Home range area (m<sup>2</sup>) as a function of animal density for males (blue triangles) and  
326 females (orange circles). Each point is an individual mouse and the line is the predicted values  
327 from the statistical model, with confidence intervals as shaded areas around the line.

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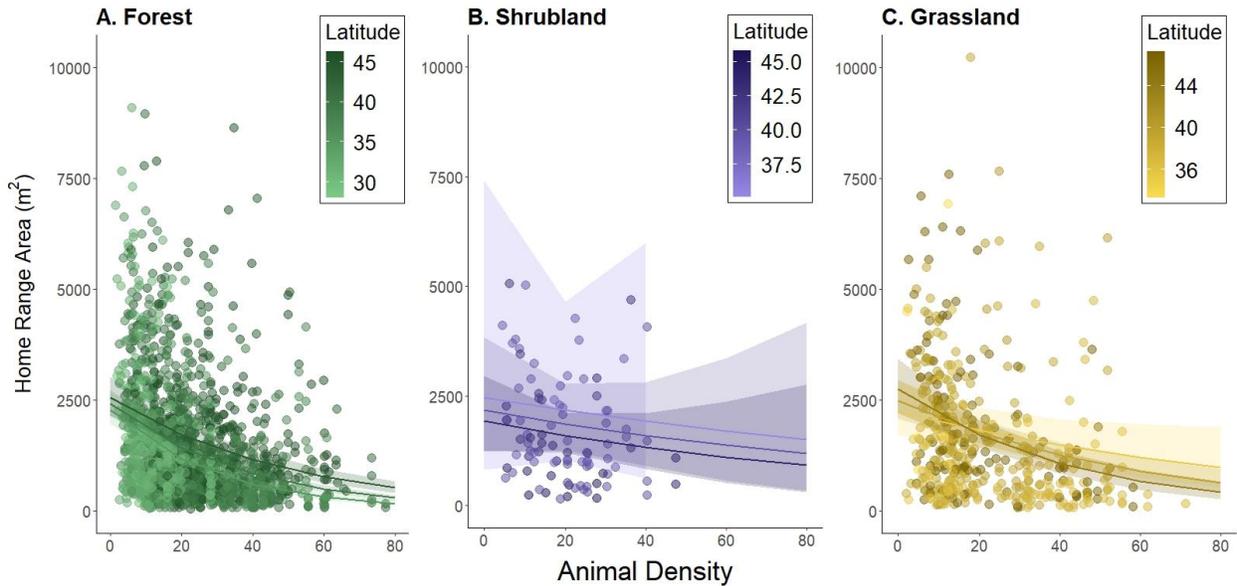
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338 **Figure 6.** Home range area (m<sup>2</sup>) as a function of animal density in (A) forests (green), (B)  
339 shrublands (purple), and (C) grasslands (yellow). Each point is an individual mouse and darker  
340 points are from higher latitudes (see color scale in each panel). The lines show relationships for  
341 three latitude ranges, determined by the emmeans() function. Note that the statistical model treats  
342 latitude as a continuous variable but three discrete lines are shown to assist the interpretation of  
343 the statistical interaction between animal density, latitude, and habitat type.

344

345

## 346 Discussion

347 Despite long-standing interest in the simultaneous effects of phenotypic and  
348 environmental conditions on space use by animals, such studies have been hampered by both  
349 small sample sizes and methodological differences across studies. Here, we leveraged the power  
350 of replication across time and space by the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) to  
351 investigate multiple simultaneous influences on space use by *Peromyscus* mice, analyzing the  
352 home range areas of almost 2,500 animals trapped across 10 years and almost 20 degrees of  
353 latitude. Our analyses confirmed generally accepted effects of sex and density on HRA: male

354 mice had larger HRAs than did females (Figure 1), and HRA declined with increasing density of  
355 congeners (Figure 5).

356         However, the novelty of this study lies in our ability to detect interactive effects on space  
357 use, due to the large sample size and temporal and spatial replication provided by NEON.  
358 Because NEON employs consistent sampling methodologies across sites, we can be confident  
359 that observed differences across latitudes and habitat types are not mere artifacts of variation in  
360 sampling methods across studies and researchers. Importantly, the large sample size also gives us  
361 the necessary statistical power to conduct robust statistical tests that include interaction effects,  
362 and the top-ranked model in our analysis included statistically significant effects of both  
363 phenotypic (sex\*body condition) and environmental (latitude\*habitat type\*animal density)  
364 effects on space use (Table 1).

365         It is not surprising that we found that on average, male *Peromyscus* have larger HRAs  
366 than do females (Figure 1). However, the interaction between sex and body condition reveals  
367 additional nuance: as body condition increases, male mice use larger home ranges whereas  
368 female mice use smaller home ranges (Figure 2). This result is consistent with established theory  
369 about space use by male and female mammals: Emlen and Oring (1977) posited that the  
370 distribution of female mammals across a landscape should be influenced by the distribution of  
371 resources, and the distribution of males should be influenced by the locations of females. Under  
372 Emlen and Oring's theory, the male strategy for maximizing reproductive success is to overlap  
373 more female home ranges and sire offspring by as many females as possible, while the female  
374 strategy is to obtain the resources needed to produce their offspring as efficiently as possible.  
375 This classic theory of differential space use by the sexes is almost certainly too simplistic (for  
376 example, multiple mating by both sexes is now known to be common across mammals), but our

377 results are consistent with expectations arising from it: as body condition increases, male  
378 *Peromyscus* range more widely (Figure 2). Meanwhile, our results suggest that females with  
379 higher body condition do not need as much space to meet their energetic needs, due either to  
380 their internal energetic reserves, or because they are stronger competitors for better quality  
381 habitat where they can obtain sufficient energy over a smaller area. Importantly, we removed  
382 from our analysis any females who were pregnant, so the higher values of female body condition  
383 do not reflect temporary mass gains (and inflated body condition scores) due to pregnancy.

384 Environmental factors, including habitat type, animal density, and latitude all had  
385 important effects on home range area. We found that HRA was smallest in structurally more  
386 complex forested habitat types and largest in grassland habitat types, with intermediate HRAs in  
387 shrubland habitat (Figure 3). *Peromyscus* often utilize vertical habitat structure such as trees and  
388 shrubs, meaning that mice in more complex habitat types, where animals can use vertical space  
389 and thus have large 3D volumes of home range (like forests), may well have smaller 2D HRA  
390 estimates when considering space use in only one plane. Use of arboreal habitat may influence  
391 estimates of home range size, although the role of vertical habitat structure is rarely considered  
392 when estimating space use (Marines-Macías et al., 2018; Rader & Krockenberger, 2006). While  
393 this effect of habitat type on HRA seems straightforward, such analyses are rare due to the  
394 difficulty of conducting the necessary field work across larger spatial scales while also  
395 controlling for potential differences in animal density across space and habitat types.

396 When examining the effect of animal density on HRA, we replicated the known  
397 relationship between the density of competitors (including both conspecifics and congeners) and  
398 HRA: as density increases, HRA decreases (Figure 5). However, the increased model complexity  
399 in our study, enabled by the use of NEON data, revealed a more complicated picture for the

400 effects of environmental conditions on HRA: while HRA declines with increasing mouse density  
401 for all combinations of latitude and habitat, the intercept of this relationship varies. Specifically,  
402 the intercept of the relationship between density and HRA is reversed between forest and shrub  
403 habitat types (Figure 6). In forested habitats, larger HRAs are found at higher latitudes (Figure  
404 6A); the reverse pattern is seen in shrub habitats, where HRAs are smaller at higher latitudes  
405 (Figure 6B). Meanwhile, the slope of the relationship between density and HRA varies with  
406 latitude in grassland habitat (Figure 6). In grassland habitats, HRA declines more steeply with  
407 increasing mouse density at higher latitudes (Figure 6C); that is, density has a bigger impact on  
408 HRA as latitude increases. One potential explanation for this interaction between animal density,  
409 latitude and habitat type is that we collapsed multiple species of *Peromyscus* into a single  
410 analysis, as species may differ in the range limits of and habitat types they use. However, 80% of  
411 the individuals included in our study were field-identified as either *Peromyscus maniculatus*  
412 (*sensu lato*) or *P. leucopus*. Not only are these species found across the entire range of latitudes  
413 in our study (Table S2), these species are known to use multiple types of habitat. *P. maniculatus*  
414 *sensu lato* is the quintessential example of a habitat generalist mammal, with recognized  
415 ecomorphs (forest and prairie deer mice) that occur syntopically (Dice, 1922; Wecker, 1963).  
416 Thus, while recognizing potential issues with combining multiple species into a single analysis,  
417 the majority of individuals in our data set are from species that are both widely distributed (Table  
418 S2) and found across multiple habitat types.

419 Our work shows that high throughput ecological data can be used to reveal important  
420 behavioral questions that have long eluded investigators. With a large sample size that spans the  
421 continent spatially and an entire decade temporally, we were able to uncover novel relationships  
422 between animal space use and both phenotypic and environmental factors. Thus, large ecological

423 monitoring networks can be used not only to uncover changes in ecological patterns, but also to  
424 examine how organismal biology will change as our world continues to be impacted by human  
425 activities.

426

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428 We thank Kaija Gahm, Alejandra Gamboa, and Elvira Bastiani for helpful feedback on this  
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430 NEON” RCN organized by Ben Dantzer, Lynn Martin II, and KEM. The National Ecological  
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433 the National Science Foundation through the NEON Program.

434

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439

#### 440 **Conflict of Interest**

441 The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

442

#### 443 **Author Contribution statement**

444 All authors contributed to the conceptualization of the study questions and design, KEM  
445 provided expertise on the study organism, SO and NPW wrote code for data analysis, SO

446 produced data visualization, all authors contributed to interpreting the results and writing the  
447 manuscript. All authors contributed critically to the drafts and gave final approval for  
448 publication. Our study utilizes open access data collected across North America, where all  
449 authors are based.

450

451

#### 452 **Data accessibility**

453 All data (downloaded from the NEON repository) and analysis code are available on Github:

454 [https://github.com/seanofallon/neon-mice\\_home-ranges](https://github.com/seanofallon/neon-mice_home-ranges).

455

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**Supplementary Materials for:**

**Uncovering multiple influences on space use by deer mice using NEON data**

**Table of contents:**

1. Rarefaction of home range - effect of sample size on HR size
2. Body sizes of small and large *Peromyscus* species
3. Model selection for *Peromyscus*

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647 **1. Rarefaction of home range**

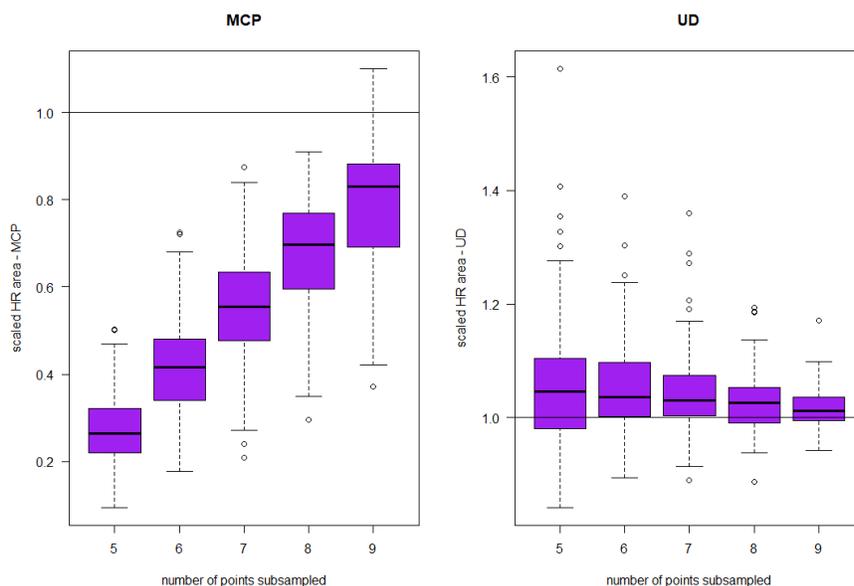
648

649 **Number of captures used to estimate home range:**

650 To determine the smallest number of captures that could be used to obtain a reliable estimate of home  
651 range size, we ran a sub-sampling analysis. In this analysis we only used individuals that had 10 or more  
652 captures (N=93) and the largest number of captures was 25. We calculated an ‘observed’ home range size  
653 using all available capture information for each individual with either a minimum convex polygon (MCP)  
654 or a utilization distribution (UD) using the functions `mcp.area()` and `kernel.area()` in the R package  
655 ‘`adehabitatHR`’ {ref}. We then sub-sampled (without replacement) the captures of each individual to take  
656 5,6,7,8, or 9 random captures from those available for each individual. We sampled each individual and  
657 each sample size 50 times and calculated home range sizes using the sub-sampled data with both MCP  
658 and UD home range estimates. We scaled each home range obtained from the sub-sampled data to the  
659 ‘observed’ home range (which was calculated using all available data points for each individual) by  
660 dividing the sub-sampled home range by the observed home range. A scaled home range value equal to 1  
661 means that the home range from the sub-sampled data is identical to the home range calculated from all  
662 samples available for the individual. Values smaller than 1 indicate that the sub-sampled data  
663 underestimates home range size and values larger than 1 indicate that the sub-sampled data overestimates  
664 the observed home range size. To examine the impact of number of data points (captures) on our ability to  
665 estimate an individual's home range, we averaged the scaled home range (MCP or UD) for each  
666 individual over the 50 runs of the simulation for each number of subsampled captures (i.e., 5,6,7,8,and 9).  
667 We thus obtained 93 values of scaled home range sizes for each sample size we examined (5-9) for both  
668 MCP and UD home range estimates (Figure S1).

669

670 **Figure S1:** Scaled home range sizes from the sub-sampling analysis using MCP (left) or UD (right)  
671 estimates for home range. We compared 5 different sample sizes (5-9) depicted on the x axis. Each  
672 individual was sub-sampled 50 times for each sample size and the scaled home range sizes for each  
673 individual was averaged over the 50 simulation runs. Boxplots show the averaged scaled home ranges for  
674 each sample size for the 93 individuals we used in this analysis.



675

676 *Results:* We found that when using an MCP estimate, as the number of data points (captures) increased  
677 we obtained home range size estimates that were closer to those observed when using all available data  
678 points. In contrast, the UD estimator for home range size was consistently similar to the one we observed  
679 when using all data points available for each individual, regardless of how many data points we used.  
680 Even when using only 5 data points, the home range sizes that we estimated were very similar to those we  
681 found when using 10 or more observations. The main impact that decreasing the sample size had on the  
682 home range size calculated with a UD estimate was a decrease in accuracy - the spread of estimates  
683 around the observed value was larger for smaller samples.

684  
685 *Conclusions:* Consistent with past investigations that compared different estimation approaches of home  
686 range size (Socias-Martinez et al., 2023, cited in main text), we found that the MCP measure of home  
687 range size is highly sensitive to the number of repeated captures for each individual. However, estimating  
688 home range size using UD was not very sensitive to sample size and even sub-samples as small as 5  
689 provided a reliable estimate of home range size.

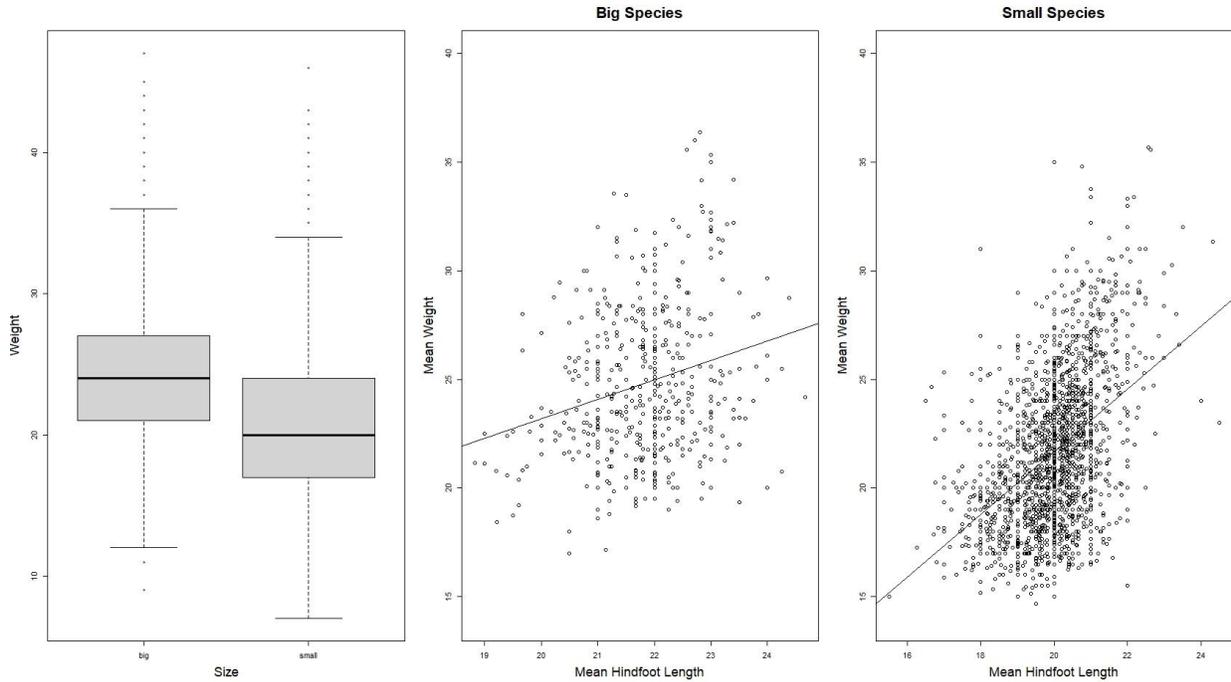
690 Given this investigation we decided to only use the UD estimation of home range size in our study - to  
691 avoid biases in home range size that might result from differences in sample size across individuals.  
692 Furthermore, because a sub-sample of 5 data points provided a reliable estimate of home range size, that  
693 was similar to a home range size calculated with 10 or more points, we included in our analysis all  
694 animals that had 5 or more re-captures.

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## 2. Mass of small and large *Peromyscus*

**Figure S2:** Small (*maniculatus*, *leucopus*) and large (*keeni*, *truei*, *gossypinus*, *attwateri*, and *boylii*) *Peromyscus* species had different mass (left). Body condition was calculated separately for big and small species because the relationship between mass and hindfoot length differed for big (middle) and small (right) species.



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### 3. Model comparison for *Peromyscus*:

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# no interaction terms:
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m1=glmer(UD ~ sex + vegType + meanMNKA + latitude + bodyCondition +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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# models with interactions:
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m2=glmer(UD ~ sex + vegType * latitude + meanMNKA + bodyCondition +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m3=glmer(UD ~ sex * bodyCondition + vegType + latitude + meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m4=glmer(UD ~ sex * bodyCondition + vegType * latitude + meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m5=glmer(UD ~ sex + bodyCondition * latitude + vegType + meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m6=glmer(UD ~ bodyCondition + latitude + sex * vegType * meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m7=glmer(UD ~ bodyCondition + sex + latitude * vegType * meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m8=glmer(UD ~ bodyCondition * sex + latitude * vegType * meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m9=glmer(UD ~ bodyCondition * sex * meanMNKA + latitude * vegType +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m10=glmer(UD ~ vegType + sex + latitude * bodyCondition * meanMNKA +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m11=glmer(UD ~ sex * meanMNKA + latitude + bodyCondition + vegType +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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m12=glmer(UD ~ sex * meanMNKA * bodyCondition + latitude + vegType +  
  (1 | year) + (1 | site), data = ao_ranges, family = Gamma(link = "log"))
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773 **Table S1:** Model comparison results for *Peromyscus* genus.

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775 Name | Model | AIC (weights) | AICc (weights) | BIC (weights) | R2 (cond.) | R2 (marg.) | ICC | RMSE | Sigma

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777 **m8 | glmerMod | 39424.2 (0.982) | 39424.5 (0.982) | 39528.4 (<.001) | 0.212 | 0.168 | 0.053 | 1191.150 | 0.822**

778 m6 | glmerMod | 39446.2 (<.001) | 39446.4 (<.001) | 39544.6 (<.001) | 0.217 | 0.162 | 0.066 | 1198.529 | 0.823

779 m3 | glmerMod | 39441.4 (<.001) | 39441.5 (<.001) | 39505.1 (0.851) | 0.209 | 0.157 | 0.062 | 1197.356 | 0.828

780 m7 | glmerMod | 39432.5 (0.015) | 39432.8 (0.016) | 39531.0 (<.001) | 0.210 | 0.167 | 0.052 | 1196.054 | 0.822

781 m12 | glmerMod | 39439.9 (<.001) | 39440.0 (<.001) | 39520.9 (<.001) | 0.211 | 0.160 | 0.062 | 1196.564 | 0.824

782 m9 | glmerMod | 39437.7 (0.001) | 39437.9 (0.001) | 39530.4 (<.001) | 0.206 | 0.157 | 0.058 | 1196.205 | 0.822

783 m4 | glmerMod | 39438.9 (<.001) | 39439.1 (<.001) | 39514.2 (0.009) | 0.204 | 0.154 | 0.059 | 1197.234 | 0.825

784 m1 | glmerMod | 39450.9 (<.001) | 39451.0 (<.001) | 39508.8 (0.132) | 0.206 | 0.154 | 0.061 | 1202.246 | 0.829

785 m11 | glmerMod | 39452.8 (<.001) | 39452.9 (<.001) | 39516.5 (0.003) | 0.206 | 0.154 | 0.062 | 1202.353 | 0.829

786 m5 | glmerMod | 39452.9 (<.001) | 39453.0 (<.001) | 39516.6 (0.003) | 0.206 | 0.154 | 0.061 | 1202.232 | 0.829

787 m2 | glmerMod | 39448.8 (<.001) | 39448.9 (<.001) | 39518.3 (0.001) | 0.201 | 0.151 | 0.059 | 1202.463 | 0.827

788 m10 | glmerMod | 39449.5 (<.001) | 39449.7 (<.001) | 39530.6 (<.001) | 0.201 | 0.158 | 0.051 | 1200.175 | 0.831

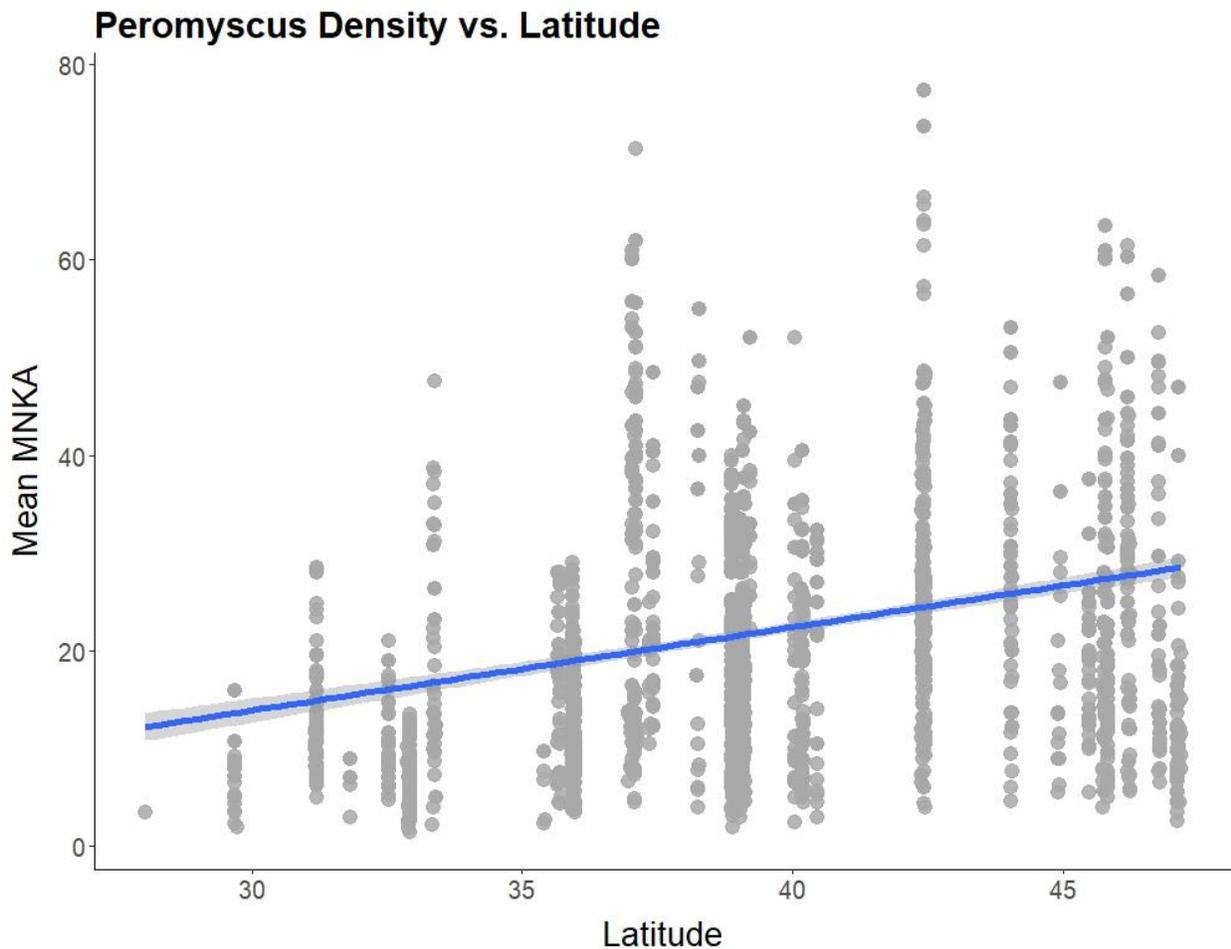
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792 **Figure S3:** Relationship between animal density and latitude.

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**Table S2:** Number of individuals from each *Peromyscus* species (columns) at each NEON site (rows) in our dataset. Note that the most abundant species (PEMA and PELE) occur at almost all NEON sites.

	PEAT	PEBO	PEGO	PEGOPELE	PEKE	PELE	PELEPEMA	PEMA	PESP	PETR
ABBY	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	28	0	0
BART	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	49	2	0
BLAN	0	0	0	0	0	78	0	0	0	0
CLBJ	2	0	0	0	0	30	0	11	0	0
DCFS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
DELA	0	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DSNY	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRSM	0	0	0	0	0	33	0	17	0	0
HARV	0	0	0	0	0	144	44	109	1	0
JERC	0	0	103	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KONA	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	42	0	0
KONZ	0	0	0	0	0	143	0	62	0	0
LENO	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MLBS	0	0	0	0	0	43	0	43	0	0
MOAB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	33
NIWO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	0	0
NOGP	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	49	0	0
OAES	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0
ONAQ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	9
ORNL	0	0	0	0	0	158	0	24	9	0
OSBS	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RMNP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0
SCBI	0	0	0	0	0	156	0	2	0	0
SERC	0	0	0	0	0	59	0	0	0	0
SJER	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	16
SOAP	0	63	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
STEI	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	51	0	0
STER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0
TALL	0	0	76	11	0	18	0	0	0	0
TEAK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0
TREE	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	20	0	0
UKFS	0	0	0	0	0	60	0	2	0	0
UNDE	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	75	0	0
WOOD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	0	0
WREF	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	9	1	0
YELL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0

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